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SUBJECT: WEEKLY NEPAL MEDIA REPORT:
SEPTEMBER 2 TO 8, 2003

- STATE FOR NP, AC, PM
- STATE FOR IN/R/MR
- STATE FOR SA/INS, PM/CBM, PM/PRO
- STATE FOR SA/PPD

1. POLITICAL AFFAIRS

-- Parties' protest to continue despite blasts: The five agitating parties will not halt their protests scheduled for the afternoon despite the series of bomb blasts in the Valley Monday morning, a UML leader said Monday. (Nepalnews.com, 9/8)

-- UML back on streets : A day after i t was conspicuously absent from the anti-government agitation, the CPN-UML came out on the streets in force, shouting slogans and courting arrests in a bid to prove their commitment to the five-party alliance. Behind this move lay a day of red faces and hectic parleys involving meetings, apologies and even a mission to its large partner in protest -- the Nepali Congress. (Media reports, 9/8)

-- UML's conspicuous absence surprises agitating allies: As a surprise to agitating political parties, the UML remained suspiciously absent from the third day of the joint civil disobedience, ensuing a serious crack in the seven-month long pact among five political parties. (Centrist "Kathmandu Post," E/D, 9/7)

-- AI flays Government for arresting "peaceful" demonstrators: Amnesty International (AI) condemned Thursday's arrest of "hundreds of political party leaders, party activists and students while on their way to a protest rally in Kathmandu", according to a statement issued by the world human rights watchdog body. ("The Kathmandu Post," 9/7)

-- Kirat Workers' Party breaks off with Maoists: Kirat Workers' Party [a rebellion party] said Saturday it has broken off with the Maoists. The party accused Maoists for reneging on agreements when the two parties merged earlier this year. (Media reports, 9/6)

-- Political parties carry out civil disobedience: Defying the government's prohibition order against holding mass gatherings, thousands of cadres of the five agitating political parties appeared on the streets of the capital and across the Police rounded up some twenty trucks of
*** TOO LARGE SKEW ***

-- Parties to accept Deuba provided House reinstated: Nepali Congress (NC) and CPN-UML leaders on Wednesday said they would not oppose the revival of the Sher Bahadur Deuba-led government if that were followed up by reinstatement of the House of Representatives. The unfolding situation is a result of the hectic roles played by the Indian, U.S. and British ambassadors in the last few days. ("The Kathmandu Post" and others, 9/4)

-- Breakdown of ceasefire: "Following the breakdown of ceasefire and peace talks by the Maoists, the country has been pushed into another round of political instability and chaos. However, the new scenario has also brought the country's major political players including the King and the five agitating political parties much closer as all of them have vowed their strong

commitment to the present constitution. Gauging the prevailing political situation, it appears that while the country's major political forces are still demanding the restoration of the House of Representatives, the monarchists are arguing in favor of holding new elections. This difference can be considered marginal and can be easily resolved if the major political forces sit together to decide the appropriate modality of bringing the constitutional process to right track." (Centrist "Spotlight," E/W, 9/5)

-- Agitating parties slow down pace: The five agitating political parties has so far peddled on their scheduled agitation as the government held out a pledge to create the right atmosphere to pave a way out of the current political imbroglio. The changing stances follow a series of hectic efforts put in by the ambassadors of UK, India and right atmosphere to pave a way out of the current political imbroglio. The changing stances follow a series of hectic efforts put in by the ambassadors of UK, India and the U.S. during the last few days. Also significant were the similar meetings between Prime Minister Thapa and the Nepali Congress (NC) president Girija Prasad Koirala, CPN-UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal. (Reports, 9/3)

-- Weapons arrive: Three tons of weapons finally have arrived via Royal Nepal Airlines in Kathmandu from Dubai, where they were dumped for about a year after Former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba purchased them in Belgium. The Indians have frowned their eyes over the arrivals of the weapons passing through Indian air. (Leftist "Jana Aastha," V/W, 9/3)

-- Proposal to make Madhav PM: The Royal Palace has sent a message to Madhav Kumar Nepal, offering him to be the next PM. Former Minister Devi Ojha conveyed the message to him. Because of this, the UML's tone about the September 4 movement has changed. Thapa, knowing his imminent fall down, has begun aligning with Nepal Congress. Once the UML is in power, its cadres will fight the Maoists from district to district. And the American and Palace policy of "iron cuts iron" or the communists fight communists will be successful in Nepal. ("Jana Aastha," 9/3)

-- Search for new PM: The days of the Thapa government are numbered. Now the palace is looking for a new candidate for the position of Prime Minister. Former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, Speaker of the House Taranath Ranabhat, UML General Secretary -- U.S. envoy for unity against violence: Nepal's constitutional forces must be united against the violence isolating the Maoists, U.S. Ambassador to Nepal Michael E. Malinowski said Tuesday. (Media reports, 9/3)

-- Government bans protest rallies: The government has banned holding rallies, processions, mass meetings, sit-ins, strikes and other such programs in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts from September 2 to September 23. (Government-owned "Rising Nepal," E/D, 9/2)

-- Foreign envoys urge party leaders: The ambassadors of the U.S., UK and India are believed to have urged Nepali Congress President G.P. Koirala and CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal to hold

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dialogue with King Gyanendra after his return from Britain. The envoys were of the view that the parties and the institution of constitutional monarchy should get united in finding solutions to the problems. Meanwhile, informed sources revealed that the ambassadors of U.S. and the UK met PM Thapa and stressed upon him not to increase the rift with the parties. (Kantipur and the

12. SECURITY FORCE, MAOIST CLASHES

-- New RNA brigade in east to crush rebels:
In its bid to tighten the national security following the collapse of the peace process, the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) has decided to establish another infantry brigade in the eastern development region, increasing its total strength from around 60,000 at present to over 65,000. ("The Himalayan Times," 9/7)

-- One killed, 12 injured in Valley blasts:
Multiple bomb blasts in the capital, six in number so far, has killed a 10-year-old student injuring 12 more Monday morning. (Nepalnews.com, 9/8)

-- Maoists kill journalist: Maoists Sunday brutally murdered journalist Gyanendra Khadka, 35, a reporter of National News Agency (ASS) for Sindhupalchowk district. (Media reports, 9/8)

-- Maoists loot banks: The Maoists looted the Agricultural Development Bank in Bara district and destroyed the Area Police Office and VDC buildings at Madhuvan bazar on 9/6. ("The Himalayan Times," 9/8)

-- Maoists continue outrage: Maoists overnight bombed the ancestral home of Raj Sabha [National Council] member Rudra K.C. in Myagdhi district, radio reports said. (Media reports, 9/6)

-- Clashes countrywide: Fourteen Maoists and one police official have been killed in separate clashes in the country since yesterday (9/3). ("The Himalayan Times," 9/5)

-- Maoists bring in weapons: The Department of Investigation has presented a report to the government saying that the Maoists have brought into the capital a large quantity of RDX and sharpshooters. (Centrist "Nepal Samacharpatra," V/D, 9/4)

-- 18 Maoists, 3 security men killed:
Eighteen Maoists and three security personnel were killed in separate incidents in Lamgunj, Morang, Siraha and Sarlahi districts on 9/1 and 9/2. (Media reports, 9/3)

-- Two civilians, seven rebels killed in confrontations: Two members of a family were killed and seven others, including women and children, in a crossfire between the security forces and Maoist rebels in a VDC of Udayapur district on Saturday. In another incident, at least seven Maoists were reportedly killed yesterday during exchange of fire in Sarlahi and Sindhuli districts. ("The Kathmandu Post," 9/2)

13. PRESS AND MEDIA

-- The government has handed out 1 license to five new FM stations. In addition to 12 new stations announced since last week, the Ministry of Information and Communications has now issued 1 license to 43 FM stations. (Independent "Nepali Times," E/W, and others, 9/5)

14. BUSINESS/ECONOMY

-- Nepal to join WTO: Nepal will join the WTO on September 11. Prachanda Shrestha, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, said the signing ceremony would be held at the Cancun ministerial conference the following day in Mexico. (Nepalnews.com, 9/6)

-- Three Nepali hotels among Asia's best:
Three Nepali hotels - Dwarika's Hotel, Kathmandu Guest House and Yak & Yeti - have been enlisted in the top 300 hotels and resorts of Asia, Kantipur (9/6) reported quoting asiahotel.com.

-- WLL phone service from next week: United Telecom Limited (UTL), a private telecom

operator, is launching its service next week, possibly on Wednesday, ending the three-decade long monopoly of Nepal Telecommunications Corporation (NTC) in basic telephony. ("The Kathmandu Post," 9/5)

-- Exemplary achievement: Chilime hydropower plant, Nepal's first indigenously developed 20 MW power plant, begins production. (Spotlight, 9/4)

15. OTHERS

-- Organic fertilizer from capital's wastes: The government has decided to grant permission to Lona Fertilizers, a private company, to produce organic fertilizer from the capital's waste for 30 years, a published report said Saturday. (Media reports, 9/6)

MALINOWSKI